

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A fuel cell, comprising:

a membrane-electrode assembly including an electrolyte membrane having an ion-conducting property, an oxidant pole disposed at one side of the electrolyte membrane in a thickness direction thereof, and a fuel pole disposed at other side of the electrolyte membrane in the thickness direction thereof;

an oxidant distributing plate disposed facing ~~[[to]]~~ the oxidant pole ~~for supplying that~~
supplies an oxidant gas to the oxidant pole; and

a fuel distributing plate disposed facing ~~[[to]]~~ the fuel pole ~~for supplying that~~ supplies
a fuel to the fuel pole, wherein

~~characterized by that:~~

at least one of the oxidant distributing plate and the fuel distributing plate is provided with (a) an opposite passage formed on an opposite surface which is opposite to the membrane-electrode assembly, and (b) a reaction passage ~~which is formed~~ on a facing surface which faces ~~[[to]]~~ the membrane-electrode assembly, which is communicated with the opposite passage, and which allows the oxidant gas or the fuel having flowed in the opposite passage to flow in the reaction passage.

Claim 2 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]]~~ The fuel cell according to claim 1, wherein for at least one of the oxidant distributing plate and the fuel distributing plate, a humidifying element ~~for humidifying that~~ humidifies the oxidant gas or the fuel flowing in the opposite passage in the fuel cell is provided.

Claim 3 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]]~~ The fuel cell according to claim 3, wherein the humidifying element is formed by making a part of the oxidant distributing plate and/or the fuel distributing plate porous to have a transmitting property in a thickness direction thereof.

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): A fuel cell, comprising:

a membrane-electrode assembly including an electrolyte membrane having an ion-conducting property, an oxidant pole disposed at one side of the electrolyte membrane in a thickness direction thereof, and a fuel pole disposed at other side of the electrolyte membrane in the thickness direction thereof;

an oxidant distributing plate disposed facing ~~[[to]]~~ the oxidant pole ~~for supplying that~~ supplies an oxidant gas to the oxidant pole; and

a fuel distributing plate disposed facing ~~[[to]]~~ the fuel pole ~~for supplying that supplies~~ a fuel to the fuel pole, wherein

~~characterized by that:~~

at least one of the oxidant distributing plate and the fuel distributing plate is provided with (a) an opposite passage formed on an opposite surface which is opposite to the membrane-electrode assembly, (b) a reaction passage which is formed on a facing surface which faces ~~[[to]]~~ the membrane-electrode assembly, which is communicated with the opposite passage, and which allows the oxidant gas or the fuel having flowed in the opposite passage to flow in the reaction passage, and (c) a porous portion ~~for communicating that~~ communicates at least a part of the opposite passage with at least a part of the reaction passage,

wherein an active material contained in the oxidant gas or an active material contained in the fuel flowing in the opposite passage is supplied to the reaction passage via pores of the porous portion.

Claim 5 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]]~~ The fuel cell according to claim 4, wherein the part of the oxidant distributing plate and/or the part of the fuel distributing plate are/is a downstream area of the reaction passage.

Claim 6 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]]~~ The fuel cell according to ~~one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, further including a refrigerant distributing plate disposed at opposite side which is opposite to the membrane-electrode assembly with respect to the oxidant distributing plate and/or the fuel distributing plate for allowing a refrigerant to flow,

wherein the humidifying element is formed by making the refrigerant distributing plate porous to have a transmitting property in a thickness direction thereof, so that the refrigerant flowing in the refrigerant distributing plate is supplied to the opposite passage of the oxidant distributing plate and/or the fuel distributing plate.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]]~~ The fuel cell according to ~~one of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein a downstream area of the opposite passage and an upstream area of the reaction passage of the oxidant distributing plate, are formed on the oxidant distributing plate by a front-rear relation.

Claim 8 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]]~~ The fuel cell according to ~~one of claims 1 to 7~~ claim 1, wherein the oxidant distributing plate and/or the fuel distributing plate have/has a hydrophilic property.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

Claim 10 (Currently Amended): A fuel cell according to ~~one of claims 1 to 9~~ claim 1, wherein a pore rate of the oxidant distributing plate is selected relatively larger at a downstream area than at an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 11 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The fuel cell according to claim 1 one of claims 1 to 10,~~ wherein a pore diameter of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ substantially constant from a downstream area to an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 12 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The fuel cell according to claim 1 one of claims 1 to 10,~~ wherein a pore diameter of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ relatively smaller at a downstream area than at an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 13 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The fuel cell according to claim 1 one of claims 1 to 10,~~ wherein the oxidant distributing plate has a hydrophilic property, and a pore diameter of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ relatively smaller at a downstream area than at an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Currently Amended): ~~[[A]] The fuel cell according to claim 1 one of claims 1 to 10,~~ wherein a pore diameter of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ relatively larger at a downstream area than at an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 16 (Canceled).

Claim 17 (Currently Amended): An oxidant distributing plate for a fuel cell to be disposed facing to an oxidant pole of a membrane-electrode assembly of the fuel cell for supplying an oxidant gas to the oxidant pole, wherein

~~characterized by:~~

an opposite passage which is formed on an opposite surface opposite to the membrane-electrode assembly and in which the oxidant gas flows; and

a reaction passage which is formed on a facing surface which faces to the membrane-electrode assembly, which is communicated with the opposite passage, and which allows the oxidant gas having flowed in the opposite passage to flow in the reaction passage.

Claim 18 (Currently Amended): An oxidant distributing plate for a fuel cell according to claim 17, wherein at least a downstream area of the reaction passage of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~[[made]]~~ porous.

Claim 19 (Currently Amended): ~~[[An]]~~ The oxidant distributing plate for a fuel cell according to claim 17 ~~[[or 18]]~~, wherein a pore rate of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ relatively larger at a downstream area than at an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 20 (Currently Amended): ~~[[An]]~~ The oxidant distributing plate for a fuel cell according to claim 17 ~~one of claims 17 to 19~~, wherein a pore diameter of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ substantially constant from a downstream area to an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 21 (Currently Amended): ~~[[An]]~~ The oxidant distributing plate for a fuel cell according to claim 17 ~~one of claims 17 to 19~~, wherein a pore diameter of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ relatively smaller at a downstream area than at an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 22 (Currently Amended): ~~[[An]]~~ The oxidant distributing plate for a fuel cell according to claim 17 ~~one of claims 17 to 19~~, wherein the oxidant distributing plate has a hydrophilic property, and a pore diameter of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ relatively smaller at a downstream than at an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 23 (Canceled).

Claim 24 (Currently Amended): ~~[[An]]~~ The oxidant distributing plate according to claim 17 ~~one of claims 17 to 19~~, wherein a pore diameter of the oxidant distributing plate is ~~selected~~ relatively larger at a downstream area than at an upstream area, of the reaction passage.

Claim 25 (Canceled).